2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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has been given up, the Gros Ventres are so sunburned that their skin looks almost "black." Singer showed a small bag of red paint which she still had. She kept a piece of beaver castor in the bag so the paint would be sweet-smelling.

In the old days the Gros Ventres were early risers. Everyone got up while it was still dark, perhaps about three o'clock in summer and before seven in winter. It didn't make any difference whether a child might otherwise be favored, the rule was ironclad that all must rise early and that no one should lie abed. This applied to all—old people as well as to children.

One method of making sure that children would be strong was to take a beaver tail and slap the child on the hand and on the back while saying: "You will be good and strong." Mary, for instance, has seen her mother do this to all her grandchildren, hitting them so hard they almost cried. The beaver is considered a very strong animal since he cuts down big trees and drags them about.

Naming and Ear-piercing

Every individaul received a name shortly after birth. Many Gros Ventres, however, were, and are, known by names other than the original one. Names were changed for particular reasons, and in addition nicknames were frequently employed. Sometimes the first name was bestowed with considerable formality, but naming could be carried out in a variety of ways,[10] as the following examples show.

"Shortly after Coming Daylight was born, her father sent for his sister's husband and told him: 'Now I invited you to name your niece. I am giving you such-and-such kind of horse' (a bay, or a pinto, or whatnot). There was a big feast on this occasion and the lodge was full of people. The namer sat in the place of honor at the back of the lodge. He held the infant in his arms, told a war deed and said: 'Now I name her 'Taken A Prisoner.' Then he said a long prayer, starting with the usual formula, and wishing the infant a long life. He then handed the infant to the person to his left saying: 'Take Taken A Prisoner'; and so the infant was passed all around the lodge, each repeating the same to

[10] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 182.

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553 852 his neighbor. The reason that her father did all this was because she was the first-born and so she was kind of expensive to her family. If a man thought he could afford it, he would make a big feast for his first-born, and then give less at the naming of his other children, although it was not always the case that the first-born got the best. It apparently depended on what the man could afford at the time."

"When Coming Daylight's sister was born, her father's sister told her husband that she wanted him to name this niece. So she came to her brother's lodge and said: 'Well, I have come for my niece, I am going to have her named by the same person who named her older sister.' This woman, then, invited a lot of people to her place and put up the feast. She gave her husband a small keg of whiskey, when he named the infant Kills One. She laid the present down in front of him and said: 'This is what I give you for naming this child—and you seem very pleased with it, too!'"

Coming Daylight's eldest daughter, however, was named "Plumes in the Hair" by her own father. This was just a private naming, that is, no invited guests or big feast. Iron Bucket, husband of Singer, named their first daughter, too. He gave her the name of "Kills Last."

Coming Daylight was offered the choice of two names for one of her little boys, by his father who dreamed of them while he was out on the hills torturing himself by the Sacrifice Dance technique.

Another of Coming Daylight's children was named by an old blind doctor. "Her sister-in-law, wife of her brother-cousin, brought in this doctor. She told him: 'I brought you here to give my sister-in-law something to drink [to hasten delivery].' The old man said: 'This child that is to be born will be a girl and I am going to name her "Earth Woman." She will grow up and live to be an old woman.'" Cora, too, mentioned that her sister-in-law (a relative of her husband's) came to her and said: "If I can, I will come and attend you when your child is born, and I will name it too." She was not able to attend the birth, but she did come later and fetch the infant. Standing in the center of the dancing space she named him "Runs on Top," after one of her relatives, and gave away lots of things in his honor.

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nothing the person can do about it. One of Singer's friends was called "Matter in the Ear" and another "Ugly or Homely." Another woman harped so much on an event which took place at Turtle River, that "Turtle River" became the name by which she was known, and most people forgot that her actual name was "Spotted Calf."

The piercing of the ears may be done at the same time as the naming, as apparently was done in the case of Coming Daylight, or might be done shortly thereafter. Singer, for instance, was named by Sitting High, but her grandmother on a different occasion pierced her ears. The parents might pay someone to do this, or a relative might volunteer. The sooner the ear-piercing is done the better, because the older the child is the more it may hurt. Singer said: "That ear-piercing goes either through a dream or through war deeds." In the former case, the dream is told and then the ears are pierced. In the latter case the person must relate a war story: "This is what I have done. . . ." The story has to be a true one concerning an incident wherein the enemy did not retaliate so the ears will heal up without any trouble.[13] The actual procedure, regardless of whether there is much formality or not, is as follows. An awl is used to pierce the ear and into the hole is inserted either a small splinter of rose-wood sharpened to a pin-point, or a porcupine quill. Whichever is used, it is greased before inserting and is left in until it falls out when the ear is healed. At this time is then inserted a small ring merely to keep the hole open. Fancy earrings are not worn by small children. Formerly boys' ears were pierced as well as girls'. The number of holes in each ear seems more or less arbitrary, but all are made on the same occasion. Coming Daylight has one in each ear; Singer has two; Coming Daylight's eldest son has three. The custom is now dying out as the present generation of mothers does not believe in it. Coming Daylight wanted to pierce the ears of her great-granddaughter but the child's mother said: "No. You will hurt her."

[13] Kroeber, 1908, p. 182 states that ear-piercing was said to be unaccompanied by special ceremonial actions.

made up my mind that I did not want such power, the immediate reason for my refusal being that I had seen doctors who swallowed what they had sucked from the weak spot in patients whom they cured, and I just couldn't bring myself to have to do likewise."

Although boys had much more freedom than had girls, they too were assigned tasks at a fairly early age. One of the responsibilities of boys was to water the horses during the day. At about the age of fourteen, however, a boy would be required to take the horses out to graze immediately after taking his morning plunge. He would be gone perhaps three or four hours and would eat only after he returned.

The play of younger boys with bow and arrow was training for later life. The older boys accompanied the men on hunting parties and by the time they were about 18 most were skilled hunters. Some families, it was said, took advantage of the fact that a boy would have killed his first big game,—antelope, deer, buffalo, —by making a feast at which this game was served. On such an occasion the boy stood at the center and gave away property, such as horses and blankets provided by his father or uncle, in order to mark the event. This was considered training for the way he should behave in later life in regard to his own property.

Boys were trained in trapping as well as hunting. There were certain songs which were sung by grandparents as the boys danced around in the lodge both before and after trapping. These songs were supposed to bring luck in finding game.

Sometimes when older boys were out taking care of horses, they would band together, daub their faces and bodies with mud as "war paint," and make a "raid" on the camp in order to steal meat which was drying on racks. The women who had worked so hard to prepare the meat got angry and sometimes fought the boys with sticks. Usually, the boys were successful, and would then cook the meat and have a wonderful feast,[1] far outside the camp circle.

Men encouraged their sons to be brave, and a boy would be anxious to go along on a real raiding party just as soon as possible because a young man had no standing until he had risked his life. An adolescent boy who accompanied a war party had to be a man

[1] This type of raiding is also described by Kroeber, 1908, p. 182.